

## Transition 101: The Basics

### What is Transition?

“Transition Services” as defined in both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997 Amendments and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, means “a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that...

- is designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated and/or supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living services, or community participation;
- is based upon the individual student’s needs, taking into account the student’s preferences and interests; and
- includes -
  - instruction,
  - related services,
  - community experiences,
  - development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and, if appropriate
  - acquisition of daily living skills, and
  - functional vocational evaluation”

With the 1997 IDEA Amendments, the primary focus of IDEA was not only to ensure that children/youth with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate public education, but also to improve results and post-school outcomes for all children/youth with disabilities.

As a result, the IDEA 1997 Amendments included the following transition related requirements:

- **“Beginning at age 14 and younger if appropriate, and updated annually, each student’s IEP must include.....a statement of the transition service needs of the student under the applicable components of the student’s IEP that focuses on the student’s courses of study...”**
- **“Beginning at age 16 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), each student’s IEP must include...a statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.”**

Simply put, beginning at age 14, the IEP team will need to determine courses of study and other educational experiences, based upon the student’s interests and goals, that will assist the student in transitioning from school to adult life.

Although a student's goals may change as they approach graduation, selecting classes that are meaningful to the student and relevant to what they want to do upon graduation, may not only improve student's post-school outcomes; but also help to reduce the student's chances of dropping out of school.

At age 16, the transition requirements indicate that the IEP team is required to identify needed transition services in specific areas related to the student's preferences and interests.

In order to effectively identify and plan for these transition services, IDEA also requires the IEP team to invite representatives from any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing and/or paying for services, to be a part of the transition planning process. The Rehabilitation Act addresses this requirement as well, placing a major focus on coordinating services and making linkages between the student, the local school district and other adult service agencies prior to the student's graduation or exit from school.

Therefore, it is clear that the provision of transition services as defined in both IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, should focus on the student's interests and post-school goals. The student and their vision for the future is what drives the transition process! Since the focus of transition planning is on the student's future, and the student will be able to access services through adult agencies and programs long after they graduate from high school; early involvement of outside agencies in the student's transition planning seems crucial to making a smooth transition from school to adult life.

Both IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act strongly support the concept that linkages to adult service agencies prior to graduation will not only help to minimize gaps and delays from school to post-school activities, but will also significantly improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

[The following information has been reprinted directly from IDEA '97 Transition Requirements: A Guide, Storms, O'Leary, and Williams, and is included because of the clarity of it's content]

The concept of transition is simple and generally has three major components:

- 1) Coach every student, along with his or her family, to think about goals for life after high school and to develop a long-range plan to get there.
- 2) Design the high school experience to ensure that the student gains the skills and competencies needed to achieve his or her desired post-school goals.
- 3) Identify and link students and families to any needed post-school services, supports or programs before the student exits the school system.

### Who May Receive Transition Services?

**Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, students who have one of the disabilities listed in the statute (mental retardation, hearing impairments, including deafness, speech or language impairments, visual impairments, including blindness, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, and learning disabilities); **and** requires special education services as a result, are entitled to receive transition services from the local education agency(school).

**Under Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act 1998 Amendments**, any student with a disability who receives special education services or who is enrolled in regular classes, and who may need Vocational Rehabilitation services to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment may be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation. Students with disabilities are eligible for VR services if they meet the following three criteria:

- **Student has a physical, learning, or mental impairment;**
- **which substantially limits their ability to be employed; and**
- **the student requires VR services to prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment.**

It is noted that a student who has a disability or is blind and is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI):

...is considered to be an individual with a significant disability and is presumed eligible for VR services,

...provided that the student intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the student,

...unless VR can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that such student is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from VR services due to the severity of the student's disability.

In Missouri, the following two vocational rehabilitation agencies are supported by federal and state funds, and are designed to assist eligible individuals with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining or maintaining employment:

**The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**, operated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), provides services to persons [students] with all types of disabilities.

**The Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB)**, operated by the Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services, provides services to persons [students] who are severely visually impaired or blind.

### State Level Guidelines for Providing Joint Transition Services?

In much the same way that transition requirements in the IDEA 1997 Amendments emphasize interagency coordination, responsibilities, and linkages between non-educational public agencies and state/local education agencies in the IEP transition planning process; the 1998 Amendments to Title I of the Rehabilitation Act also emphasize vocational rehabilitation coordination and collaboration with education officials in the area of transition planning for students with disabilities.

The Rehabilitation Act 1998 Amendments require Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) state plans to outline a procedure for coordination between VR and education officials, that will facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from special education services to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services; and requires VR to develop statewide interagency agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities.

In response to these federal guidelines, Missouri has developed the following statewide agreements regarding the partnering of agencies to provide transition services to students with disabilities in Missouri's schools:

- **Joint Memorandum of Understanding Regarding VR Participation in Transition**
- **Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP) Agreement**
- **Community Rehabilitation Program/Supported Employment Service Provider Transition Assessment Agreement**

Many of the transition services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation at the local level are driven by the guidance outlined in these agreements. Copies of these agreements can be found in **Appendix A**.

It is noted that there may also be additional statewide agreements between various agencies regarding the provision of services to students with disabilities, however for the purpose of this guide we have chosen to highlight only the above agreements that involve direct partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education.

### **Partner's Roles and Responsibilities in Transition**

[This section lists only a few of the many partners involved in effective transition planning for students with disabilities, and highlights only a portion of the roles and responsibilities that each partner brings to the table in the transition planning process. However, this information may be used as a foundation from which to build effective communication and good transition planning. It is also noted that the roles of the Work Experience Counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, in relation to the Cooperative Work Experience Program will be discussed in the COOP Section of this guide.]

**The Student's Role:** It is the student's responsibility to actively participate in all discussions and IEP meetings in which decisions will be made about their future. The student is responsible for making vocational/career choices, communicating their preferences and interests (plans after high school); identifying their skills/abilities and areas where additional assistance is needed; discussing accommodations or modifications that they have had/used that really worked well; and expressing the types of community or work experiences in which they have participated.

It is also noted that it is very important that the student understands their disability and individual rights under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). The student should also be a strong self advocate in the following areas: expressing their hopes and dreams for the future; asking for assistance, accommodations, or help in an appropriate manner; and using effective problem solving skills.

**The Parent/Family's Role:** Families are extremely important partners in transition planning, and also need to take an active role in IEP and career planning discussions. Family members should not only be a mentor and advocate for the student; but support and clarify the student's vision, strengths/abilities, and explain what information or services may be needed to help the student in reaching their goals. The family should also ask questions regarding the type of services that different adult service agencies or partners may be able to provide and how they may access those services.

**The Local School District's Role:** It is the local school district's primary responsibility to provide those transition services entitled under IDEA to students with disabilities while they are still in the secondary school setting. Such transition services could include school and community-based work experiences, vocational/career technical training, career exploration, preparation for post-school activities, specialized transportation, and assistive technology services and devices. These services will usually be provided through the student's IEP.

It is also the school district's responsibility to allocate the necessary resources to implement the services agreed upon in the IEP; and to invite any other agency

that may be responsible for providing or paying for transition services to IEP meetings and career planning discussions. If an outside agency fails to provide agreed upon services in the IEP, it is the school district's responsibility to reconvene the IEP team to determine how these services might now be provided. The school district is not responsible however, for providing and paying for those services that another agency agreed upon, but failed to provide.

As a representative of the school district, the special education teacher's role in transition includes providing specific information regarding the student's strengths, past achievements, and current progress in school. The teacher is also responsible for discussing and identifying courses of study or work experiences that might be beneficial given the student's interests and identifying any strategies or accommodations/modifications which might be helpful to the student in accessing the general curriculum. Finally, it is the special education teacher's role to link students and their families to appropriate post-school services, supports, adult service agencies or programs prior to the student's graduation or exit from school.

**Vocational and Adult Education's Role:** Vocational and Adult Education plays a major role in transition planning for students with disabilities who are interested in pursuing a training program offered through a local career/vocational technical school. For the purpose of this guide, the focus will be on the role of the vocational resource educator (VRE), provided through the local career/vocational technical school in the IEP transition planning process.

The VRE is responsible for helping to identify realistic, educational goals by participating in the development of the vocational component of the IEP, if the student is interested in, or a referral is being considered to one of the programs offered through a career/vocational technical school. By participating in the IEP, the VRE will be able to inform the student and parent about specific vocational programs; participate in the development of transition goals and objectives; oversee the transition of the student into an appropriate vocational program; and facilitate the implementation of any needed accommodations or modifications, within the parameters of the vocational program. The VRE also often takes on the role of a liaison with other school and agency personnel and assists in the placement of students into gainful employment and/or continued education.

**Vocational Rehabilitation's Role:** For the purpose of this guide we will focus on the role and services provided through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Although Vocational Rehabilitation's role is generally one of planning and preparing for when the student leaves the school system, and the state VR agency is considered to be "a payer of last resort" while the student is still in the secondary school setting; VR is still responsible for providing transition services

when they are beyond the scope of special education and required for the student to participate in the VR program or reach an employment outcome. Therefore, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's primary role in the transition process is to communicate and collaborate with local school districts in an effort to ensure a smooth transition for students with disabilities from high school and the receipt of special education services to post-secondary activities and the receipt of VR services, as appropriate.

The VR Counselor may act as a consultant in the transition process by sharing information with students, families, and schools regarding VR services and eligibility criteria. VR may also be responsible for providing technical assistance to schools in the form of in-service presentations, participation in college or career fairs, and referring students to other adult agencies who provide services in the areas of employment, independent living, housing, transportation or recreation.

In addition, when appropriate and feasible, the VR counselor will participate in the student's IEP meeting and provide information regarding the differences between the entitlement of school programs and eligibility of adult services, college support services, career planning, SSI work incentives, and specific VR transition services that may be provided based upon the student's strengths and interests. Finally, Vocational Rehabilitation may not only play an active role in transition planning while the student is still in school, but may also continue to provide services long after the student has graduated/exited the school system.

**Other Outside Agency's Role:** Other agencies or programs, such as the Centers for Independent Living (CIL), Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP), and Supported Employment Service Providers (SESP) may be invited to attend student's IEP meetings and participate in transition planning, to discuss the supports and services they may be able to provide prior to or after graduation. The role of these agencies will be similar to Vocational Rehabilitation in that they will help identify and provide information regarding the specific services they may provide, eligibility criteria, and how/when to access their services.

Centers for Independent Living have expertise in the area of disability awareness, self-advocacy, independent living and community resources and programs, and their services may be accessed at any time in the student's life. Vocational Rehabilitation often contracts with CRP and SESP providers for their expertise in providing specific vocational evaluation/assessment services, assistance with employment development, training, or job coaching assistance for students with disabilities. CRP/SESP providers will often work directly with the students in evaluating and identifying additional work skills and abilities to assist with further vocational planning both in school and upon graduation. They will also often participate in IEP meetings with students and their families.

# ***Appendix A***

*Joint Memorandum*

*COOP Agreement*

*CRP/SESP Transition Assessment Agreement*

*MOU Checklist for Transition Assessment*



### "The IEP Process for Transition"

The purpose of this section is to provide teachers and other individuals involved in transition planning with a step by step approach to the IEP process that focuses on the student's long range post-school goals; and practical information/concrete examples on how to develop and write IEPs that will focus on identifying post school outcomes through the IEP that not only meet the transition requirements of IDEA, but most importantly, meet the needs of the students.

Even though IDEA is currently going through the process of reauthorization, it would appear that the focus on student outcomes beyond graduation will remain an important component. Therefore, the information that has been included in this section continues to appear relevant and very important in transition planning.

A five step approach to the "IEP Process for Transition", has been copied directly from "IDEA '97 Transition Requirements: A Guide", Storms, O'Leary, and Williams; and can be found in **Appendix B**. It not only includes the specific IDEA requirements relevant to the steps in the IEP process, but provides a practical interpretation of those requirements as well. This information provides educators with an opportunity to look at the IEP process from a more longitudinal point of view, focusing on where the student wants to be in the future, and developing a plan for transition services that may seem more meaningful to the student.

### Addressing Specific Transition Requirements in the IEP

This information will focus on three transition requirements in the IEP that may be the most critical in planning for the student's future. These transition requirements include the identification of "post-school outcomes" as part of the IEP process; and how to develop/write "a statement of transition service needs", and "a coordinated set of activities" within the "statement of needed transition services". A sample IEP meeting agenda is also included at the conclusion of this section.

[The information in the remainder of this section has been reprinted and reformatted directly from a working paper written by O'Leary and Collison entitled, "Transition Services-Helping Educators, Parents, and Other Stakeholders Understand: Postschool Outcomes, Course of Study, Coordinated Set of Activities".

This paper was compiled as a result of information collected from Transition Outcome Project's in over 14 states in the nation, to assist educators in writing IEPs that not only meet the transition requirements of IDEA, but also meet the needs of the students. It is noted that this paper has not been altered to reflect Missouri schools or agencies, so the reader will need to substitute some of the examples with those agencies /organizations found in Missouri. **The information below is copywrited, so it may not be reprinted or redistributed without the expressed consent of the authors.]**

### ❖ POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES

“Transition Services” means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. [300.29]

IDEA has always promoted the concept that transition services was “an outcome-oriented process” and that this process should help students move from the school setting to whatever they may want to do postschool. While it has been stated that this process and thinking should be part of every student’s IEP from 14 years of age on; many special educators have not put into practice an outcome-oriented approach to planning, discussion, and decision-making in the IEP. This means that if the IEP of every student 14 years of age and older is to be outcome-oriented, then the IEP process and team must begin the IEP discussion and decision-making with the student’s desired postschool outcomes in mind. One could get into lengthy discussion about student’s not knowing what they want to do or many students not being realistic. This paper is not the forum for that discussion and debate. Suffice to say that regardless of whether a student knows precisely what they want to do or whether they initially state something that appears unrealistic, the IEP discussion must start with and focus on the student’s outcomes. Given that, the IEP team should list **specific** information for each postschool outcome in the areas suggested below:

- Employment.
- Community Participation.
- Residential.
- Social & Recreational.
- Mobility.
- Postsecondary education.

These outcome areas were chosen because they represent major adult life activities around which planning should take place. This does not mean that other postschool outcome areas could not be chosen. Other areas could be chosen based upon the student’s anticipated needs, interests, and preferences as well as the IEP team’s input. For the sake of discussion, these broad areas were chosen to provide examples of possible postschool outcomes and how they might be recorded as part of the IEP.

Remember, this information should be based upon the student’s preferences, interests, and needs. By addressing the desired postschool outcomes in the areas listed above, one is developing a BIG picture of a student’s life. The

## Transition Planning in the IEP

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discussion, planning, and decision-making in the IEP that would lead toward those outcomes will provide educators with a direction for decision-making in educational programming, school, and community experiences; special education and other services; and needed supports. Ultimately, this type of long-range thinking and planning should result in an IEP that is outcome-oriented and a plan that will prepare students for postschool adult life.

Based upon the major postschool outcome areas identified above, below are examples of possible postschool outcomes that could be identified in a student's IEP. Remember, the identification of postschool outcomes are **broad** statements of what the student desires in each major adult life area; they are not **goals** or **objectives**.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

The student (or family) wants –

- To be independently employed and knows the field he/she wants to study or pursue (be specific).
- To be independently employed but does not know in what field.
- A job, and the IEP team anticipates the need for time-limited supports (e.g., a job coach).
- A job, and the IEP team anticipates supported employment (e.g., long-term support – job coach or natural supports).
- Organizational employment through an adult service provider (e.g. enclave, mobile crew, or contract work).
- Sheltered employment through an adult service provider.
- Day habilitation services through an adult service provider.
- Other...

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

The student (or family) wants—

- To be independently mobile in the community and access services of choice (specify services).
- To be independent in the community with the support for transportation to access services of choice (specify services).
- Community access with the support of family and friends for accessing services of choice.
- Community access with a provider.
- Other ....

### **RESIDENTIAL**

The student wants to—

- Live independently without support.
- Live in a supervised living arrangement.
- Live with a friend.
- Live on a military base.
- Live in a dorm room while attending postsecondary education.
- Live with a support staff roommate.
- Live in a group home.
- Live in a family home with support.
- Live in a specialized care facility.
- Other...

### **LEISURE AND RECREATION**

The student has—

- Identified specific recreation/leisure activities of choice and can participate independently (specific activities).
- Identified specific community facilities to join for recreation/leisure services (specify facilities or organizations).
- Identified activities of choice to do with family members or friends.
- Identified activities of choice to do with a provider.
- Participated/participates with group activities supported by a provider.
- Other...

### **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

The student wants to attend—

- A four-year college or university to gain a degree in specific field.
- A four-year college or university but is unsure of what field he/she will pursue.
- A community college prior to continuing in a four-year program.
- A community college.
- A community college for nonacademic courses (specify).
- A vocational training program in a specified field.
- A non-academic course at the local library, through a local non-profit organization, or through other avenues (specify); or OTHER...

## PUTTING IT TOGETHER – EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIED POSTSCHOOL OUTCOMES

### Employment:

- Wants to be a carpenter.
- Desires employment in the field of security.
- Wants to go to college to be a teacher.
- Work in an enclave in the janitorial field.
- Obtain a job in data entry with the assistance of a job coach.
- Undecided about a field of interest but does want a full-time job working outdoors and around people.

### Community:

- Wants to obtain a driver's license to be independently mobile within the community.
- Wants to become a member of the local church youth group.
- Wants to join a softball league.
- Be able to independently visit the grocery store (or other business) without a provider.
- Learn where the main community services are located (i.e., post office, grocery store, bank and mall) to access with a friend.

### Residential:

- Wants to live in an apartment with a friend.
- Live in a dorm while attending college.
- Remain at home with family with a habilitation provider coming in to help learn daily living skills.
- Live in group home.
- Would like to become a homeowner.

### Recreation/Leisure:

- Enjoys fishing, biking, and shooting pool.
- Likes to be outdoors with friends having picnics in the park.
- Enjoys music concerts and singing in the local youth choir.
- Participates in Special Olympics but wants to find other clubs with organized sports.

### Postsecondary:

- Wants to attend a university to obtain a degree in business.
- Wants to attend University of Phoenix Online to obtain a college degree while also being able to maintain a job.
- Attend the local community college for dance class.
- Take a gardening class at the local Home Depot.
- Attend community college to get AA degree before deciding on whether to pursue a four-year college.
- Attend Maricopa Skills Center to gain certification in culinary arts.

## ❖ **STATEMENT OF TRANSITION SERVICE NEEDS:** Course of Study

Now that the postschool outcomes have been articulated and the IEP team has an understanding of the student's vision for the future, courses of study and educational experiences need to be determined and addressed over multiple years. When the IDEA of 1997 went into effect, it called for IEP teams to develop a **statement of transition service needs by the age of 14, or younger if appropriate.**

## Transition Planning in the IEP

There were several reasons why this requirement was put into place for all students 14 years of age and older. One of the primary reasons was to reduce the dropout rate of students with disabilities (38 percent for students with disabilities vs. 28 percent for the general population). The idea was, by age 14, to actively involve the student, IEP team, and family in designing and planning an educational program (all courses of study as well as all educational experiences) that would show a direct relationship between what the student will be taking and their desired postschool outcomes. It was felt that if the student was actively involved in this type of discussion, planning, and decision-making and if the educational program plan responded to their desired postschool outcomes, then students might for the first time see why school is relevant and meaningful, and thus they just might have a vested interest in remaining.

The expectation is that all courses and educational experiences should directly relate to the student's postschool vision or desired outcomes. While the level of specificity in the identification of courses and educational experiences is not dictated in the law, common sense would suggest that the more specific one can be in identifying the courses and show how they relate to the student's desired outcomes, the greater the likelihood students will see the relevance and importance of the courses they will be taking, which should increase the likelihood that they would remain in school.

While the course of study and listing of specific educational courses and experiences would most likely follow the course offerings of the general population, the course of study for students with moderate or severe disabilities would be different. Instead of the listing of specific course titles, for students with moderate to severe disabilities one should list course content areas (e.g., mobility, self-determination, independent living, money management, personal relationships etc.)

- For a student with a mild disability, an example of the desired postschool outcomes and the resulting course of study might look like this:

### POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME/VISION

<b>Employment:</b>	<i>I would like to become a social worker, like the kind who helps kids who have been abused or neglected.</i>
<b>Community Participation:</b>	<i>I enjoy cooking for my parents and would like to volunteer making food baskets and serving meals to the homeless.</i>
<b>Recreation &amp; Leisure:</b>	<i>I want to learn more about yoga and Tai Chi. I enjoy spending time outdoors with my friends playing Frisbee and soccer.</i>
<b>Postsecondary Training &amp; Learning Opportunities:</b>	<i>I want to start out at a community college taking classes that will prepare me for a four-year university and then apply to a four-year college to get a degree in social work.</i>
<b>Independent Living:</b>	<i>I plan to live with my parents while going to a community college for two years and then live in a dorm at the university. Eventually, I want to get married and have a house of my own.</i>

## Transition Planning in the IEP

### COURSE OF STUDY

Year 1 – Age 14/15	Year 2 – Age 15/16	Year 3 – Age 16/17	Year 4 – Age 17/18
Math I	Math II	Math III	First Aid/CPR
English I	English II	English III	English IV
World History	P.E.	American History	Govt./Free Enterprise
Biology	Earth Science	Early Childhood Development	Psychology
Keyboarding/Health	Culinary Arts I/II	Culinary Arts III/IV	Comm. Based Empl.
Career Exploration	Human Services	TA in kinder classroom	Comm. Based Empl.

- For a student with a more moderate disability, an example of the desired postschool outcomes and the resulting course of study might look like this:

### POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME/VISION

<b>Employment:</b>	<i>I would like to work around people and animals.</i>
<b>Community Participation:</b>	<i>I like sports and participating in the Special Olympic Program. I attend a single's group at church and sing in the choir.</i>
<b>Recreation &amp; Leisure</b>	<i>I will continue to be active in special Olympic and church activities. I am looking into participating in a bowling league. I like to fish and camp and will continue these outdoor activities. I also watch TV.</i>
<b>Postsecondary Training &amp; Learning Opportunities</b>	<i>Looking at working full-time after graduation so any training will be on the job.</i>
<b>Independent Living:</b>	<i>I will be capable of living with a friend or roommate but will need assistance with budgeting, buying food, and paperwork related to paying monthly bills.</i>

### COURSE OF STUDY

Year 1 – Age 14/15	Year 2 – Age 15/16	Year 3 – Age 16/17	Year 4 – Age 17/18
LS Math	LS Math	LS Math-money management	LS Math-purchasing and budgeting
LS Language Arts	LS Language Arts	LS Language Arts	LS Language arts
Social Living	Social Living	Portfolio Development	Portfolio Development
Employment Skills	Community Based Instruction	Work Experience	Work Experience
Community Training	Portfolio Development	Food Preparation	P.E.
P.E.	P.E.	Daily Living Skills	Daily Living Skills
Art for Enjoyment	Community Based Assessment	P.E.	Independent Living Skill
	Food Preparation	Social Living	Social Living

\*LS = Life Skill

### ❖ **Statement of Needed Transition Services:** Coordinated Set of Activities

IEP teams need to include in the IEPs of **all** students with disabilities who are age **16 and above (or younger if appropriate)** a **statement of needed transition services** that includes strategies/activities that will assist the student to prepare for postsecondary activities such as postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, community participation, or whatever it is the student desires to do. While a listing of possible postschool activities is identified in the law, one should keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive; this list provides only some examples of the postsecondary activities that students may choose or need.

The statement of needed transition services shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include:

1. Instruction
  2. Related Services.
  3. Community experiences.
  4. The development of employment.
  5. Other postschool adult living objectives.
- And, if appropriate:
6. Acquisition of daily living skills.
  7. Functional vocational evaluation.

In addition to specifying the activities/strategies that will be used to assist students to prepare for their future, IEP teams should also specify for each activity/strategy the expected date of implementation and the person or agency responsible for arranging and/or providing services.

The following pages provide examples of activities/strategies that can be used to assist students to prepare for their desired postschool goals. The activities/strategies are organized by the seven areas contained in the statement of needed transition services and relate to one or more of the postschool activities listed above. Activities/strategies that have an asterisk (\*) directly relate to assisting students to further identify and clarify their preferences and interests for postsecondary outcomes. Since the statement of needed transition services is based upon the students needs, interests, and preferences as they relate to postsecondary outcomes, these types of activities/strategies should be considered for each student and repeated as needed to update information.



### **SAMPLE TRANSITION ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES: INTRODUCTION**

The sample activities/strategies in each of the following transition areas on the following pages are only a partial listing of the many activities that an IEP team could recommend and put into the statement of the needed transition services. In developing the activities in the statement of needed transition services, it should be kept in mind that the area in which the activity/strategy is listed is not what is most important. Many of the activities/strategies could be justified under one or more of the seven areas. What is most important is making sure that all of the critical activities/strategies are identified and listed in one of the seven areas.

The specific listing of activities/strategies must be individualized for each student based up on their needs, preferences, personal interests, and desired postschool goals. Not all of the example activities/strategies will apply to any one student. It should also be remembered that the listing of all of the activities/strategies cannot be completed during the next 12 months nor completed by only school staff. This statement is a long-range plan for postschool adult life and, when combined, all of the activities reflect all of the things that should be done to help the student prepare for and make the move into whatever they choose to do when they leave the school system. While only some of the most important activities/strategies will be addressed in any one given school year, all of the activities/strategies must be reviewed and refined each year based upon what has been accomplished, the current and projected future needs of the student, and emerging student preferences and interests.

### **INSTRUCTION**

Activities/strategies listed in this area have to do with “instruction,” whether that is a formal or informal imparting of knowledge or skills. The activities/strategies can include but are not limited to, such things as:

- Broad curricular areas of needed coursework, educational experiences, skill training, etc.
- Activities/strategies that are necessary to prepare for and take part in college, continuing education, further skill training, adult living, etc.
  1. Collect information regarding the student’s desired postsecondary educational involvement. \*
  2. Visit college campuses and meet with student support services. \*
  3. Consider enrollment in a tech-prep program with supports for eleventh grade.
  4. Consider enrollment in a cooperative education course for the \_\_ grade.
  5. Learn about Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.
  6. Explore admission requirements for possible part-time enrollment at a Vocational/Technical School.

7. Learn about the process for accessing apartments for rent.
8. Obtain information on continuing and adult education opportunities.
9. Learn about the Americans with Disabilities Act.
10. Learn about student's rights under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
11. Enroll in Self-Advocacy/Self –Awareness Studies in the \_\_ grade.
12. Enroll in a career selection course in the \_\_ grade.\*
13. Enroll in an adult living course in the \_\_ grade.\*
14. Enroll in an internship/apprenticeship program in the \_\_ grade.
15. Participate in extra curricular activities such as \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Enroll in Adult/Continuing Education courses such as \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Enroll in the Community College courses such as \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Enroll in parenting classes in the \_\_ grade.
19. Learn about time management.
20. Practice negotiation skills for job raises, car purchases, etc.
21. Access tutoring services in school or through a private agency.
22. Write an informational interview letter to the disabilities resource coordinator at postsecondary schools of interest.
23. Complete a learning styles inventory to identify preferences and strength modes.
24. Take a GED pre-test (TABE).
25. Research college scholarship opportunities.
26. Apply for a Big Brother/Sister to help with homework and mentoring.
27. Take a CRP/First Aid course.
28. Enroll in a SAT prep course in the \_\_ grade.
29. Learn about community agencies that provide services and support to people with disabilities.
30. Tour postschool occupational training programs. \*
31. Obtain, complete, and submit applications to colleges of choice.
32. Obtain, complete, and submit applications for tuition assistance.
33. Register for classes with city parks and adaptive recreation programs.
34. Take classes through the local 4-H organization.
35. Enroll in and take classes through the local County Extension Program.

### **RELATED SERVICES**

Activities/strategies in this area should consider the current and projected related service needs of the student. This area of the statement of needed transition services is not for specifying the needed related services for the next school year. Related services for the coming school year should be addressed in another section of the IEP. Rather, the context of related services in this statement has to do with determining if the related service needs will continue beyond school, helping to identify who are what agency might provide those services, helping to identify how the student and parent can access those services and then connecting the student and parent to whomever will provide those services before the student leaves the school system. This type of planning, discussion, and identifying of activities/strategies should make the move from the school being one related service provider to another adult agency or service provider as seamless as possible for students and families.

1. Identify and visit community mental health agencies.
2. Identify potential postschool providers of related services and funding sources.

3. Identify potential postschool providers of recreation therapy or occupational therapy and potential funding sources.
4. Visit potential postschool providers of physical therapy.
5. Learn to use a guide dog effectively.
6. Apply for a mentor through a local, non-profit agency for counseling of substance abuse and delinquency.
7. Engage in conversations using an augmentative communication device.
8. Receive orientation and mobility training in place of employment.
9. Interview a job coach for assistance with learning job tasks.
10. Learn about potential postschool providers of speech therapy.
11. Explore city/county transportation options.
12. Apply for eligibility with state transportation program.
13. Apply for eligibility with the state division of Mental Health Services.
14. Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from the Social Security Administration (SSA).
15. Write a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and submit it to SSA to obtain funding for transportation to and from a job.
16. Identify possible sources of support for coping with difficult life situations.
17. Obtain a driving capability assessment from \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Interview and select an adult provider.
19. Modify vehicle – explore options for modified transportation.
20. Complete an assistive technology evaluation.
21. Enroll in a delinquency prevention program.
22. Obtain new equipment (i.e., wheelchair, seating, braces, Assistive Technology, etc.).

### **COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES**

Activities/strategies listed in this area emphasize activities/strategies that are generally provided outside the school building and that prepare the student for participation in community life. These activities should encourage the student to participate in the community, including government, social, recreational, leisure, shopping, banking, transportation, or other opportunities.

1. Investigate participation in church/temple or social/recreation events. \*
2. Learn about and visit potential places in the community to shop for food, clothes, etc. \*
3. Investigate opportunities for socialization training in the community.
4. Investigate youth volunteer programs at the library.
5. Investigate youth volunteer programs at the hospital.
6. Investigate participation in community sports teams or organizations (e.g., softball, bowling, etc.).
7. Join a community recreation center or YMCA. \*
8. Learn about the community theatre group.
9. Learn about the community symphonic organization.
10. Investigate participation in the community arts council.
11. Learn about the community horticultural club.
12. Learn about the community historical preservation society.
13. Identify different living/housing options.
14. Tour apartments for rent. \*
15. Investigate participation in community civic and social organizations (e.g., Lions Club, Rotary, Elks, Jaycees, Kiwanis, etc.) \*
16. Collect information regarding the student's desired postsecondary community involvement. \*
17. Obtain a state identification card or driver's license.

18. Register to vote.
19. Join a community team or organization (e.g., church group, self-advocacy club, Toastmasters, Alcoholics Anonymous, bowling league, etc.).
20. Learn to ride a skateboard, roller blade, bike or other outdoor activity.
21. Visit the mall and food court with a provider, identifying stores and meals of choice.
22. Register with the selective service.
23. Observe a courtroom or jury duty process.
24. Determine transportation options within the community (e.g., city bus, taxi, Dial-a-Ride, Red Cross, Safe Ride, carpool, etc.).
25. Attend "Open Mic Night" at a local coffee shop.
26. Attend and participate in local government activities (e.g., council meetings, school board meetings, city/council public hearings, etc.).
27. Participate in age appropriate social activities, (e.g., dances, dating, concerts, sporting events, etc.).
28. Open a bank account.
29. Request a volunteer center directory to research and select a site of interest.
30. Learn about and access postal services.
31. Register for classes with city parks and adaptive recreation programs.
32. Identify and learn about community medical and health services.

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Activities/strategies listed in this area focus on development of work-related behaviors, job seeking and keeping skills, career exploration, skill training, apprenticeship training, and actual employment.

1. Collect information regarding the student's desired employment and career interests for adult life beyond college and/or postsecondary vocational training. \*
2. Work towards obtaining a license to become a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Meet with adult workers in the career field of \_\_\_\_\_. \*
4. Participate in a career awareness program in the \_\_ grade. \*
5. Participate in a community-based career exploration program in the \_\_ grade. \*
6. Explore possible summer employment through the Summer Youth JTPA program.
7. Meet with supported employment agencies to identify and evaluate their services.
8. Learn about the county one-stop career centers.
9. Obtain information and/or apply for youth apprenticeship program.
10. Complete the online application for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
11. Schedule a visit with the local Vocational Rehabilitation office to determine eligibility for services.
12. Meet with a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
13. Write a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and submit it to Social Security to obtain funding for a job coach.
14. Write a Plan of Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and submit it to Social Security to obtain funding for starting business.
15. Learn more about the voucher for Ticket to Work (for SSI beneficiaries) and interview providers.
16. Contact the state Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to obtain employment services.
17. Register with Employment Services.
18. Take the ASVAB.
19. Visit the labor organization offices for a local union.
20. Practice completing job applications and interviewing skills.
21. Obtain a paid job in an area of interest.

22. Conduct an informational interview with military branch officers.
23. Memorize your Social Security number.
24. Attend transition fair or career fair at school/and or in the community.
25. Research through O'Net careers, qualifications and specifications, and key words for resume development.
26. Obtain a list of providers to Vocational Rehabilitation who conducts person-centered planning, job development and placement, and job coaching.
27. Draft resume, cover letters, and thank you notes for after interviews.
28. Meet with a Job Corps counselor.
29. Participate in job shadowing.
30. Observe job site and develop a task analysis for job activities.
31. Purchase clothes for interviews.
32. Meet with armed forces recruiter.

### **POSTSCHOOL ADULT LIVING**

Activities/strategies in this area emphasize activities/strategies that focus on adult living skills. These are generally those activities that are done occasionally such as registering to vote, filing taxes, obtaining a driver's license, renting or buying a home, accessing medical services, obtaining and filing for insurance, planning for retirement, and accessing adult services such as Social Security.

1. Collect information regarding the student's desired residential life beyond high school and residential postsecondary educational setting. \*
2. Register to vote and learn about election process.
3. Register for the draft and learn about public service obligations/opportunities.
4. Obtain a driver's license.
5. Obtain assistance to complete a tax return.
6. Explore insurance issues/needs.
7. Explore guardianship issues and estate planning.
8. Apply for disability card for reduced fees with public transportation.
9. Obtain assistance on management of financial resources and legal issues.
10. Learn about managing/maintaining/performing simple repairs on a home and obtaining modifications/accommodations.
11. Contact the Center for Independent Living for information on self-advocacy.
12. Learn about ways to purchase/lease a car and maintain vehicle or obtain modifications.
13. Open a bank account and manage finances/budget/bills.
14. Apply for credit cards and manage personal debt.
15. Apply for housing assistance (HUD).
16. Apply for consumer education on home buying and informed decision-making.
17. Visit adult service providers in the community.
18. Learn about expectations for eating in restaurants.
19. Obtain information in managing personal health and fitness.
20. Meet with social worker to discuss interpersonal skill development.
21. Plan for vacation/leisure activities.
22. Learn about a personal planning process.\*
23. Learn about consumer skills, rights and responsibilities.
24. Join the local YMCA, YWCA, health club or community recreation center.\*
25. Obtain information about financial planning and investing.
26. Contact the state Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to obtain training on independent living.

### **DAILY LIVING SKILLS**

Daily living skills are those activities that adults do most every day. These can include such things as preparing meals, budgeting, maintaining a residence, paying bills, raising a family, caring for clothing, and/or personal grooming.

1. Visit community agencies that provide daily living skills training to adults.
2. Develop a contact list of agencies that provide residential supports in this county.
3. Meet with and interview adults with disabilities and their families who are receiving residential supports.\*
4. Register with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).
5. Contact a DDD case manager to be placed on the residential service waiting list.
6. Visit/tour a variety of adult housing options with supports.\*
7. Develop a network of informal supports (i.e., friends, neighbors, etc).
8. Explore possible technology and adaptive assistance.
9. Develop emergency procedures for use at home.
10. Take courses in foods, family life, child development, and life management.
11. Understand directions for taking medications.
12. Select a primary care physician and dentist.
13. Schedule and keep medical appointments.
14. File taxes.
15. Take childcare classes.
16. Take a cooking class.
17. Sign up for utilities (i.e., gas, water, electric, telephone, cable, etc).
18. Learn to operate a washer and dryer.
19. Enroll in Lamaze and prenatal care classes.
20. Visit a local car dealer to determine whether to buy or lease a car.
21. Prepare an initial housing budget (e.g., down payment, furniture, bath towels, cleansers, utilities, etc).
22. Cost compare for household items (e.g., appliances, linens, etc).
23. Meet with a doctor to discuss birth control/family planning options.
24. Manage daily time schedule.
25. Open a checking/savings account.
26. Manage money and pay bills.
27. Meet with a family financial planner.
28. Listen to the weather forecast to plan daily/weekly outings.
29. Develop a personal fitness routine.
30. Obtain a bank ATM card.
31. Visit a bank to discuss a car or school loan.
32. Meet with a potential landlord.
33. Investigate local insurance companies for automobile and rental or homeowner's insurance.
34. Maintain a home or residence interior and exterior.
35. Purchase food and prepare meals.
36. Purchase clothing and learn how to care for clothes,
37. Learn about the physical and personal care of children.

### **FUNCTIONAL VOCATIONAL EVALUATION**

A functional vocational evaluation is an assessment process that provides information about job or career interests, aptitudes, and skills. Information is gathered through observations, formal or informal measures, and should be practical. Information gathered through a functional vocational assessment can be used to refine educational experiences, courses of study, and employment activities/strategies in the statement of needed transition services.

1. Participate in a community-based situational vocational assessment program.\*
2. Develop a vocational profile based on functional information.\*
3. Provide opportunities for job sampling in the community in the \_\_ grade.\*
4. Contact agencies that provide functional vocational assessments in the community.\*
5. Meet with employers to develop a situational vocational assessment site in the community related to the student's interest in \_\_\_\_.\*
6. Collect functional information regarding the student's vocational interests and abilities.\*
7. Complete CHOICES or Bridges computer program to determine vocational interests.
8. Meet with school counselor to affirm vocational interests and align graduation plan to need.
9. Refer to appropriate professional to conduct a comprehensive vocational evaluation.
10. Conduct formal aptitude tests such as the VALPAR and WRIOT.
11. Use existing functional information about the student to develop functional assessments.\*

### **❖ IEP MEETING AGENDA**

For all students beginning at age of 14, or younger if appropriate, transition services must always be discussed in every IEP meeting. The IEP team must address items 1 -4 specified below. If the student turns 14 during this IEP term, a statement of transition services must be in place by the student's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.

For all students beginning at the age of 16, or younger if appropriate, transition services must always be discussed in every IEP meeting, involving every item listed below. If the student turns 16 during the IEP term, the statement of needed transition services must be in place by the student's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

1. *Welcome/Introductions.*
2. *Discuss and identify the student's postschool desired goals or vision based upon individual preferences and interests in the following areas:*
  - Employment.
  - Community participation and mobility.
  - Recreation and leisure.
  - Postsecondary training and other learning opportunities.
  - Independent living.

## Transition Planning in the IEP

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3. *Discuss the student's present level of educational performance in each of the areas above. Identify the following:*

- Where the student is functioning in relation to where he/she wants to go and what he/she wants to do beyond secondary schooling.
- Student strengths as well as relevant deficits or weaknesses.

4. *Develop a statement of transition service needs. Design a "course of study" that satisfies the following:*

- Is a long-range educational plan or multi-year description of the educational program.
- **Is meaningful** to the student's future and will **motivate** him/her to complete school.
- Directly relates to the student's anticipated postschool goals and the student's preferences and interests.

5. *Develop a statement of needed transition services. Design a coordinated set of strategies/activities that incorporates the following:*

- Includes interagency linkages and responsibilities.
- Identifies agencies/persons that will provide and/or pay for services.
- Directly relates to the student's anticipated postschool goals and the student's interests in preferences.
- Promotes movement from school to postschool goals.
- Consider the following:
  - Instruction.
  - Community experience.
  - Employment.
  - Related services.
  - Adult living.
  - Postschool training.
  - Daily living, if appropriate.
  - Functional vocational evaluation, if appropriate.

6. *Develop IEP goals and short-term objectives for special education services.*

For students who are 17, or who are turning 17 in this IEP term, discuss transfer of rights at the age of majority.

[Adapted from the Montana Office of Public Instruction "Transition IEP Agenda."]



### Sample IEP (Missouri)

A sample IEP that has been endorsed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education can be found in **Appendix B**. Educators are encouraged to incorporate some of the concepts regarding post-school outcomes, transition service needs and needed transition services when developing/writing the transition and goal pages of either this IEP or one that has been developed by the local school district .

### IEP Planning for Sheltered Employment Transition Activities

The following memo was sent by the Division of Special Education to local directors of special education in the fall of 2001 to assist educators in planning and coordinating sheltered employment transition services:

"Subject: Sheltered Workshop Participation  
To: Special Education Directors

As a result of federal regulation changes, the Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education are making some minor changes to the Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP) Agreement. Effective immediately students who are released from school to work in a sheltered workshop will no longer need to be released and given credit through the COOP program. If the IEP team determines, as part of the student's transition plan, that a student should obtain work experience at a local sheltered workshop, the following process should be followed:

- ❑ Refer the student to Vocational Rehabilitation for sheltered workshop certification.
- ❑ Provide VR with copies of medical records, the latest IEP and evaluation report (formerly known as the diagnostic summary), as well as any other information which may be used to document the student's disability.
- ❑ Include a statement in the student's IEP documenting that the student has been referred to VR for sheltered workshop certification, and that the student will be released from school for "x" number of hours per day/week to participate in work experience at "y" sheltered workshop. It should be noted that credit for this work experience can no longer be awarded through the COOP program, but should be awarded in accordance with school district policy through the IEP process.

Vocational Rehabilitation will no longer need to open a case or determine eligibility for students who are being referred for sheltered workshop placement, and therefore, these students will no longer be appropriate referrals for the COOP program. VR will however, continue to remain the certifying agency, and school districts may continue to refer students for certification purposes only. It should also be noted that if, at any time after the student has been placed in the sheltered workshop, the student, parent/guardian, school official or VR representative make a determination that supported or competitive employment may be a realistic vocational option to pursue, that individual should be referred back to VR for additional services."

In addition, it is important to note that it is the local school district's responsibility to not only coordinate this type of transition activity through the IEP process, but when placing a student off-campus in a sheltered workshop setting, the school district must also reach an agreement with the local sheltered workshop regarding average daily attendance funds.

### IEP Planning for Non Paid Work Experience Transition Activities

Educators are encouraged to plan and coordinate as many different types of work experience activities as possible for students with disabilities prior to graduation. Through career exploration and work experience activities students can be exposed to a wide variety of employment opportunities which will assist them in making realistic post-school vocational and educational choices. Although some work experiences provide students with competitive employment opportunities, such as the Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP); IEP teams may also consider a wide variety of non-paid work experiences.

Many schools in Missouri offer some type of career or job exploration class for students with disabilities which provide them with an opportunity to spend some time out of the classroom in a job setting, either on or off campus. In addition, a few school districts and career centers in Missouri have developed some very unique partnerships with local businesses in the community and have designed entire transition programs around one or two employers, such as a hospital or grocery store.

When students participate in non-paid, work experience activities as part of a class or transition program that they are enrolled in, and the credit they receive for the work experience is tied to that class; educators simply need to document this activity in the IEP. It is also important to note that school districts do not need to contact vocational rehabilitation before providing this type of work experience as part of the student's transition plan.

If, however a student chooses to participate in some type of paid work experience, and the school wants to release the student during the school day and give them high school credit based upon the number of hours they work; then the school district is strongly encouraged to contact Vocational Rehabilitation and refer the student for VR services. This type of work experience activity may be provided through the Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP), or one of the other DESE approved programs for off-campus work experience.

It is important to note that school districts may not request average daily attendance (ADA) funds for students being released from school to participate in work experience activities unless those activities are tied to a class or through one the DESE's approved off-campus programs. Therefore, it is not enough to simply write into the student's IEP that he/she will be released from school to participate in paid or unpaid work experience, unless that work experience is sheltered workshop activity.

Please refer to the "Graduation Requirements for Students in Missouri's Public Schools" booklet (which can be found on DESE's home page, under publications) for specific guidelines regarding the policies and procedures for assigning credit and releasing students to participate in off-campus work experiences.

# ***Appendix B***

*IEP Process for Transition*

*Sample IEP (Missouri)*

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

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### Access to Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Local school districts are primarily responsible for providing transition services to students with disabilities who are still in the secondary school system, and the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that meets the needs of the student and the transition requirements is a great step in effective transition planning. However, planning for the student's future can not possibly be done by the school district alone. Many of the activities/strategies for transition planning in the IEP involve linkages with outside adult service agencies like Vocational Rehabilitation who can provide transition services prior to graduation or exit from school, when appropriate, to assist the student in achieving successful post-school outcomes.

This section will attempt to provide guidance regarding how Vocational Rehabilitation services may be accessed, when students may access these services, and what types of transition services VR may be able to provide prior to a student's graduation or exit from school. This section will also contain some general guidance to VR counselors regarding proper caseload management procedures when working with students who are still in the secondary school setting. This information should assist educators and VR counselors in "getting on the same page" and help to ensure a smoother transition for the student as they graduate from high school and enter into adulthood.

It should be noted that the following pages in this section contain only a brief outline of VR procedures and "best practices" as they relate to the provision of general transition services for students with disabilities in Missouri's schools; and should not be interpreted as VR policy. In addition, since Vocational Rehabilitation services are based upon the student's individual needs and provided through informed choice; VR counselors are encouraged to use this information merely as a quick reference guide in working with students/schools. VR counselors should continue to consult with the district office supervisor to ensure district office practices and VR policies/regulations are being followed in providing quality transition services to students with disabilities.

### Partnering with Schools

- Develop rapport and maintain consistent communication with one or two key school personnel (i.e. work experience coordinator, special education director, nurse, principal).
- Develop and coordinate a set schedule (day of the week or month) with school personnel for appointments and meeting with students at the school (allow for flexibility, but try to keep consistent).
- Offer technical assistance and support regarding VR transition services (i.e. in-service training, presentations at local career fairs).

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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### Referral Process

- A referral to VR may be initiated by the local school district, a student, a family member, or other educational or community resource agency/organization.
- Any student with a disability who receives special education services, or who is enrolled in regular classes, **and** requires VR services to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment may be referred to the nearest VR District Office. However, students who are blind or have significant visual impairments must be referred to the nearest Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) District Office. In addition, students being referred primarily for participation in the COOP program, must be receiving special education services through an IEP and the school district must have signed a COOP agreement that was approved by VR.
- The appropriate time to make a referral is when the school district, in partnership with the student and family, as appropriate, has begun to focus on post-school outcomes targeting employment or post-secondary education/training activities in the transition planning process **AND**, the student is within two years of graduation or exit from school; unless otherwise agreed upon by the VR counselor, the student/family, and the school.
- A referral does not automatically result in the student's eligibility for services, unless the student is receiving SSI/SSDI benefits based upon their disability. Although students are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), they must be determined eligible for VR services through an individualized assessment process.

### Referral Packet

- Some counselors may want to complete the following VR forms with the student at the time the case is opened, or they may provide the forms to school personnel ahead of time so that the forms are completed when the counselor meets with the student/family:
  - ✓ Questionnaire for VR services (orange)
  - ✓ Health Assessment Questionnaire (gray)
  - ✓ Release of Information form (white)
  - ✓ Characteristics of Maladaptive Behavior form (this is not required by VR, however some counselors like to use this form to document maladaptive behaviors for students whose IQ is between 70-85).
  - ✓ Koller Adolescent and Adult Behavior Scale-Revised (KAABS-R) form (to be completed by the student and a parent or teacher when the student has a diagnosis of SLD or ADD/ADHD).

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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- The VR counselor, working with the school district and other appropriate agencies, will identify and coordinate which diagnostic assessments will be needed for determining eligibility and planning for VR services. Although the counselor does not need this information before the student can be referred or a case is opened; most school districts find that providing the following information at the time of referral, may avoid duplication of diagnostic assessments, and expedite the eligibility process:
  - ✓ Most recent IEP or 504 plan, as applicable
  - ✓ Most recent diagnostic summary/evaluation report from the school
  - ✓ Copy of SSI/SSDI award letter, if applicable
  - ✓ Psychological, medical and specialty evaluations
  - ✓ Other reports, assessments or letters from teachers, if appropriate that reflect how the student's disability affects their performance in the classroom or at school.

### **Services Provided Prior to Official Case Opening**

- Transition services which may be provided without officially opening a case or establishing eligibility may include:
  - **Consultation to students and families:** [may be provided in person, via phone or in writing regarding career options, VR services, or referrals to other agencies]
  - **Technical assistance to schools:** [may also be provided in person at formal in-service meetings or career fairs, via phone or in writing regarding VR services]
  - **Participation in IEP meetings:** [for students not yet determined eligible, the VR counselor will need to prioritize their attendance based upon the student's age and proximity to services, complexity of the disability, needs expressed by the school/family, and the VR counselor's schedule; for those students who are eligible for services, the VR counselor will make every attempt to attend the IEP meeting or at least participate via conference call]
  - **Sheltered Workshop Certification and/or Referral to Extended Employment Specialist:** [if the IEP team determines sheltered workshop placement/training to be appropriate, the school should provide copies of the student's latest IEP and diagnostic summary/evaluation report; and refer the student to the local sheltered workshop for certification by the extended employment specialist or directly to the VR counselor for certification]
- It should be noted that school districts often refer students who may not be at a point in their vocational planning that they could benefit in terms of VR services, however the IEP team has specified that participation in a non-paid, on/off campus work experience or vocational exploration activity would be appropriate in terms of transition services. In this situation, the student may be released to participate in, and receive credit for these transition activities through the school, without a VR case needing to be opened. Therefore, while the VR counselor may provide consultation services and/or participate in the student's IEP meeting, the VR counselor may not need to officially open the student's case, just because the student is involved in a work-related activity.

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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- The same holds true for students referred who are not interested in receiving any VR services while they are still in high school, but would like possible services such as assistance with the cost of college, post-secondary accommodations or employment assistance when they graduate. While it is important to meet with these students prior to graduation, the VR Counselor would probably not need to open an official VR case until the student's final year of high school.

### Opening an Official VR Case

- Once the student has been referred to VR and the VR Counselor has met with the student and parent/guardian (if student is under 18 years of age) to review and complete all of the paperwork in the referral packet; and the VR Counselor has determined that this is an appropriate referral; the VR Counselor will have the student and parent/guardian sign the application for services and an official case will be opened with VR.
- MORIS CASE MANAGEMENT NOTE: ALL CASES OPENED ON STUDENTS PRIOR TO GRADUATION OR EXIT FROM SCHOOL SHOULD BE CODED AS "A TRANSITION STUDENT", AND THE EMPLOYMENT STATUS MARKED AS "NOT EMPLOYED: STUDENT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION".

### Eligibility

- The VR Counselor will determine the student's eligibility for services based upon the following:
  - The student has a physical, mental or learning impairment, and
  - The student's impairment substantially limits their ability to be employed, and
  - VR services are required for the student to obtain or maintain employment.
- The VR Counselor is required to establish eligibility within 60 days of case opening. It is important to remember that eligibility for vocational rehabilitation is based upon the student's vocational limitations as a result of their impairment, not just the existence of a physical, mental or learning impairment alone.
- Therefore, the diagnosis of a learning disability or attention deficit disorder by itself, for example would not be enough to establish eligibility. It is noted that the LD specialist and/or district supervisor in the local VR district office can identify functional limitations for those students with learning disabilities; and assist the VR counselor in determining eligibility. However, the state psychological consultant must identify functional limitations due to Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).



## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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- The VR Counselor will notify the student in writing once their eligibility has been determined, and a copy of this letter should also go to the contact person at the school district.

### Identification of an Employment Outcome and VR Services

- Once eligibility has been determined, the VR Counselor will schedule a meeting with the student and parent/guardian and the school to discuss the student's possible post-school outcomes or vocational plans. It is at this time that VR transition planning and the determination of appropriate services are reviewed and discussed.
- If the student and parent/family is not sure what type of employment or career options would be best, and together they are unable to identify a vocational goal through general career counseling and exploration; then the VR Counselor may offer the student an opportunity to participate in a vocational evaluation, transition or supported employment assessment through a local Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) or Supported Employment Service Provider (SESP).
- In determining which type of evaluation or assessment might be most beneficial to the student, the VR Counselor should review the student's medical, psychological, and vocational/educational history. Although the exact type of evaluation or assessment will need to be based upon the individual student's interests and needs, informed choice, and the availability of services in the area, the following generally applies:
  - ❖ **Specific Job Objective Evaluation** – student needs to confirm from 1-3 vocational objectives, appears motivated, has some stable work or educational history, and shows an indication of vocational aptitude/transferable job skills. (Final year)
  - ❖ **Exploratory Job Objective Evaluation** – student has more than three vocational goals, appears motivated, has some stable work or educational history, and shows an indication of vocational aptitude/transferable job skills. (Final year)
  - ❖ **Comprehensive Evaluation** – student has unstable work history or educational background, has history of social, emotional, drug or alcohol problems, appears unmotivated, and there is some question regarding their physical, intellectual or emotional work tolerances. (Final year)
  - ❖ **Comprehensive Transition Assessment (CTA)** – student has a significant disability, very limited/no work experience, history of multiple/significant disabilities and there are several questions regarding the student's physical, social, intellectual or emotional work tolerances. Both long and short term vocational goals will need to be identified. Requires the school and provider to have signed an MOU, and the provider to conduct personal interviews with various partners in the transition planning process to coordinate services. (Second semester prior to final year)

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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- ❖ **Community Based Transition Assessment (CBTA)** – student has successfully completed objectives of CTA and a vocational goal has been established, but specific strategies or accommodations need to be identified to assist the student in meeting his/her vocational goal with success. Requires the school and provider to have signed an MOU. (Second semester prior to final year)
- ❖ **Supported Employment Assessment (SEA)/Job Development** – generally same as CTA, however does not require as much community based assessment, or personal interviews with transition partners, and the school and provider do not have to sign an MOU. (Final year)
- MORIS CASE MANAGEMENT NOTE: THE CASE REMAINS IN STATUS 10 UNTIL AN EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, OR VOCATIONAL GOAL HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED. AS SOON AS VR SERVICES ARE AGREED UPON AND A GOAL ESTABLISHED, THE CASE SHOULD BE MOVED INTO AN ACTIVE STATUS.

### The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

- Once the student is determined eligible for VR services and an employment outcome has been identified; the student, student's parent/family, school and VR counselor will develop a plan similar to the student's IEP that will outline specific services needed for the student to reach their employment outcome. This plan is called and "Individualized Plan for Employment" (IPE). It should be noted that if the student is under the age of 18, his/her parent or guardian should be involved in developing this plan for services, and would be required to sign the plan as well.
- The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) are very similar in that they both include an outline of individualized services to accomplish a student's long range employment goal. Both documents indicate specific services to be provided, list service providers, and include any special services or assistance the student may require in order to successfully achieve their goal. In addition, both documents are outcome oriented plans developed with the student, based upon their interests, abilities, and choices.
- The IPE and IEP should be coordinated to ensure a seamless transition from school based services to post-school activities/services. Every attempt should be made by VR to develop the IPE before the student graduates or exits from school, and a copy of the student's IPE should be provided to the school district.

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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- Depending upon the type of services planned, the VR counselor may use one of the following IPE formats available in MORIS:
  - ✓ **Standard IPE or standard guidance and counseling IPE** – used when students are receiving transition services that are not related to the COOP program.
  - ✓ **COOP IPE** – used when a student has secured employment in a job of his/her choice, will be released from school for work, and will be awarded HS credit for his/her work hours. Mark transition school to work responsibility box. (18)
  - ✓ **COOP Guidance and Counseling IPE** – used when the student has been determined eligible for services, and has identified a vocational goal, but is currently looking for a job which will count for COOP credit. Mark transition school to work and COOP G & C responsibility box. (14)
  - ✓ **COOP Paid On-the Job Training IPE** – used when the student has secured employment for the COOP program, however VR will be reimbursing the employer for on the job training provided to the student to assist them in learning the job. Time-limited and used mostly with semi-skilled or skilled level positions. Mark transition school to work and OJT responsibility box. (18)
- MORIS CASE MANAGEMENT NOTE: WHEN THE VR COUNSELOR PROVIDES ANY ONE OF THE ABOVE COOP SERVICES THROUGH AN IPE, THE SPECIAL PROGRAMS MOVE TO “COOP” MUST BE ENTERED IN MORIS.

### VR Transition Services (Prior to Graduation/Exit from School)

- The following transition services can be provided directly by the VR counselor:
  - Career guidance and counseling.
  - Assistance with resume writing, providing job leads and contacting employers.
  - Assistance with college or training programs, researching accommodations necessary to access these services, setting up appointments to visit programs.
  - Assistance with participation in the Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP).
- The following transition services are usually contracted or purchased by the VR counselor:
  - Employment outcome services (EOS) to include employment development, job placement, and job retention services; through a CRP.
  - Skills training through a CRP.
  - Supported Employment Job Coaching through a CRP or SESP.
  - Short-term job coaching through a SESP.
  - Paid on the job training through an employer.
  - Assistive technology device/service – the purchase of this service while the student is still in school requires the VR counselor to thoroughly document why the school district would not be providing and paying for this service.

## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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- It is noted that VR transition services which require VR to authorize the expenditure of funds are considered to be “purchased services”. The VR counselor should only “purchase” services when they are beyond the scope of special education or 504 guidelines; and are required for the student to reach an employment outcome or participate in the VR program. Typically, most “purchased” services will not be provided by VR until the student’s final year of school because it is generally the local school district’s responsibility to allocate funds necessary for the provision of transition related services.

### VR Services (After Graduation/Exit From School)

- Once the student exits the secondary school setting, the VR counselor becomes even more directly involved with the student, and becomes the primary coordinator of services. It is at this time that the VR counselor takes the lead role in helping the student reach successful employment. The VR counselor will continue to work closely with the student to search career options, and obtain employment based upon the student’s interests, skills and abilities. VR will also provide guidance and counseling in the areas of disability awareness, accommodations, and self advocacy.
- Once the student exits the secondary school setting, VR may also be able to provide assistance with the cost of formal training at a career/vocational technical school, community college or university, or a number of other services such as the purchase of assistive devices (artificial limbs, wheelchairs, or hearing aids), basic living/transportation costs associated with completing a training program, or job related tools/equipment/licenses to assist the student in obtaining employment in his/her chosen field of work.
- It should be noted that most VR services are provided at no cost to the student or family. However, the provision of some VR services may be based on agency financial guidelines and student/family income. The VR Counselor is encouraged to address services related to financial guidelines on an individual case by case basis with the family. Other types of financial aid such as the Federal Pell Grant, scholarships, loans, and medical insurance may also be utilized to assist with financial costs associated with some VR services.

### Closing a VR Case as Successfully Employed (26)

- Once a student has graduated or exited the secondary school setting, has obtained and maintained employment for over 90 days that is commensurate with his/her skills and abilities and interests, is no longer interested or expresses a need for further VR services, and the VR counselor can document that substantial VR services were provided to assist the student in reaching their employment outcome; VR may close the case as successfully employed (Status 26).
- However, prior to closing a case, the VR counselor must assure that the job goal is consistent with the individual's capacity, interest s, ability, resources and strengths, AND assure that there are no further services needed or desired by the individual.
- When working with students who are still in the secondary school system, the VR counselor needs to be sure to discuss at length with the student as they approach graduation, whether or not they would like additional VR services when they leave the high school setting. Since one of the goals of good transition planning is successful post-school outcomes for students, and linking students to outside agencies such as VR prior to graduation is a key component in the transition planning process; it is very important for the VR counselor to evaluate the student's need or desire for further services before closing the case.
- MORIS CASE MANAGEMENT NOTE: A STATEMENT INDICATING THAT "NO FURTHER SERVICES ARE NEEDED OR DESIRED BY THE STUDENT, INCLUDING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING OR NO COST TRAINING WHICH HAVE BEEN OFFERED AND DECLINED" SHOULD BE INCLUDED ON THE CLOSURE IPE SENT TO THE STUDENT.
- In regard to a COOP 26 Closure: For students who graduate, and have successfully participated in/received VR COOP services, but choose to go on to some type of post secondary education/training program; the VR counselor can close the case as successful (26) if:
  1. The student is still employed in the same job or similar job that they had been working in during high school, and
  2. the VR counselor reviews additional VR services with the student that are still available upon graduation, and
  3. documents that substantial services were provided, and
  4. verifies that the client is not interested in any further services.

## ***Snapshot of VR Transition Services in Missouri***

- **Referral**
  - Any student with a disability (except severe visual impairments) who receives special education services, or who is enrolled in regular classes, **and** requires VR services to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment may be referred to the nearest VR District Office.
  - The appropriate time to make a referral is when the student has begun to focus on post-school outcomes targeting employment or post-secondary education/training activities in the transition planning process **AND**, the student is within two years of graduation or exit from school.
- **Eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation:**
  - The student has a physical, mental or learning impairment, and
  - The student's impairment substantially limits their ability to be employed, and
  - VR services are required for the student to obtain or maintain employment.
- **Development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE):**
  - After eligibility is determined, student works with VR counselor to identify an employment outcome based upon student's interests, strengths, needs and with informed choice. Once an employment outcome has been identified, the VR counselor and student jointly develop an IPE that will identify the student's vocational goals and the specific VR services to be provided to assist the student in reaching those goals. The IPE and IEP/504 plan should be coordinated.
- **VR Transition Services (Prior to Referral/Eligibility):**
  - Consultation to students/families (career guidance, info about VR/other agencies)
  - Technical assistance to schools (career fairs, in-service presentations)
  - Participation in IEP meetings
  - Sheltered Workshop Certification
- **VR Transition Services (After Eligibility Determination):**
  - Assessment/Vocational Evaluation
  - Career Guidance and Counseling
  - Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP); No-cost, on-the-job training
  - Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP); Paid on-the-job training
  - Employment Outcome Services through a CRP provider
  - Supported Employment or short term job coaching through a SESP provider
  - Skills/vocational training
  - Assistive technology devices and services
- **VR Services (After Graduation)**
  - VR can continue to provide same services as above, but may also be able to provide assistance with access to post-secondary education/training opportunities; assistance with accommodations in a classroom or employment setting; assistance with the cost of college/training; other services specific to the unique needs of the individual in order to reach a successful employment outcome. After graduation, the VR Counselor becomes the primary coordinator and provider of services. It is important to note that the provision of some services, either before or after graduation may also be based upon the student/family's income and resources, and VR financial guidelines. Specific questions regarding services based on financial need should be directed to the VR counselor on an individual basis.

## Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

### Special Education and the Purchase of Diagnostics

The IDEA 1997 Amendments clarified the importance of special education continuing to conduct three-year re-evaluations for students with disabilities, however indicated that formal testing is no longer required as a part of this re-evaluation process if the IEP team determines it is not needed. The Division of Special Education in Missouri has provided guidance to schools indicating formal testing is only required if the school needs it to answer one of the following questions:

- Does the student continue to be a child with a disability?
- What is the student's current level of functioning?
- Is additional information needed in order to provide appropriate accommodations or services for the student?

It is clearly an IEP team decision regarding whether or not formalized/updated testing is needed, however the IEP team should take into consideration the student's interests, preferences and needs in making this decision. If the IEP team determines no more formalized testing is needed, Special Education does need to inform the family they will not be doing additional testing.

The IEP team may consider providing updated testing/diagnostics as part of the transition planning process, especially when the student's post -school outcome involves college or vocational training; however it is important to note that there is nothing in the law that requires the school district to provide this service. It should be noted that there are many school districts that do go above and beyond the requirements in the law and do provide updated testing and formalized assessments for students with disabilities when the student plans to attend post -secondary training programs or when the IEP team feels it is appropriate and in the best interest of the student. These school districts are to be commended for their "best practice efforts" in this area.

Please refer to **Appendix C** for a sample copy of a waiver that one of Missouri's schools provide to students regarding updated testing prior to graduation for students with disabilities who are going on to college or additional training.

### Vocational Rehabilitation and the Purchase of Diagnostics

While it is clear that Vocational Rehabilitation can not purchase updated diagnostics/formalized testing for educational purposes or as a part of the re-evaluation process; if a student is referred to VR, and the VR counselor determines that additional formalized testing is needed in order to establish eligibility or to determine appropriate services, Vocational Rehabilitation may



## Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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purchase diagnostics. The VR Counselor is however, strongly encouraged to utilize existing medical records and testing information to establish a student's eligibility for services and it should only be on a very rare occasion, based upon the individual situation that VR would ever purchase updated testing. Prior to purchasing any additional diagnostics for students with disabilities, the VR counselor is encouraged to review and discuss the student's existing medical/educational records with their district office supervisor and/or learning disabilities specialist to determine if the purchase of additional testing is necessary.

In an effort to save diagnostic costs, school districts and Vocational Rehabilitation are encouraged to partner closely with one another in the sharing and purchasing of diagnostic information for students during the transition planning process. Many schools and local VR district offices in Missouri have even split the costs of a diagnostic battery of tests, such as the school providing and purchasing the achievement testing (Woodcock Johnson, etc.) and VR purchasing the intelligence testing (WAIS-III, etc.). Please refer to the VR Best Practice Guides on Purchasing Diagnostics and Confidentiality in **Appendix C**.

### Guidance Regarding Learning Disabilities and Diagnostics

For vocational rehabilitation counselors, it is often students with learning disabilities that present the most difficult challenges in reviewing previous academic and intelligence testing reports to determine if updated cognitive and academic testing is necessary. The following information is provided as guidance to VR counselors, and was taken from Dr. Jim Koller's (professor at the University of Missouri and the VR state psychological consultant) discussion regarding learning disabilities during the February 2001 VR Transition Counselor Training:

- Although IQ's are typically stable over time under certain conditions; special education deals with an atypical population and there are often numerous co-morbid disabilities and factors involved with students with disabilities. There are all kinds of issues that can come up between age 7 and 17 because there is a world of difference that can occur during these developmental years. Therefore, one important question to ask when reviewing old testing information is, does the IQ really represent something that is realistic today for this child?
- The diagnosis of a learning disability is determined differently in the educational setting and for VR eligibility. School districts focus on the educational component looking at how the learning disability affects academic performance. Vocational rehabilitation uses the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) definition of a learning disability which focuses on how the learning disability affects the student's functional vocational limitations, in addition to academic performance. Please refer to the RSA definition of a learning disability in **Appendix C**.



## Diagnosics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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- For the purpose of diagnosing/determining a learning disability, the following battery of tests, which could be given/purchased either by the school district, VR or a combination of the two are recommended (it is noted that the K-BIT and Slossen are simply screening measures and should not be used as diagnostic measures):
  - WISC III/ WAIS-III/Stanford Binet-V
  - Woodcock Johnson III-Test of Achievement
  - Wechsler Memory Scale-III
  - MMPI-2 or MMPI-A/Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI)
- School districts may choose to administer only those sub-tests of the Woodcock Johnson associated with basic achievement, and not give the student all 22 subtests. However, if they do not give all 22 subtests, they are encouraged to document that the student does not have a problem in reading or written expression as reflected by their grades in English, etc.; and that is why those sub-tests were not administered.
- In trying to determine if the test scores are “current enough” to establish eligibility, the VR counselor is encouraged to look at the documentation that leads up to today; and review the older data to see if it was consistent over time. Inconsistent IQ scores, or large differences (20 points plus) between verbal/performance IQ or between individual subtests may indicate there is a need for additional testing. Generally speaking, when the accuracy of the student’s records are questioned, there are co-morbid problems, and/or records reflect inconsistent data, the VR counselor may want to consider purchasing updated diagnostics.
- One note in regard to reviewing medical/educational records for students referred to VR on the basis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the VR counselor should look at not only the diagnosis, but also the intensity, frequency, and duration of the problems described.
- Additional information regarding WAIS-III interpretation, work skills and VR counselor questions related to learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders can be found in **Appendix C**.

### Vocational Evaluations, Transition, and Supported Employment Assessments

One of the many transition services that Vocational Rehabilitation can provide for students with disabilities in the secondary school system includes vocational evaluations and assessments. These services are provided by Vocational Rehabilitation for students who are approaching their final year of school, and need assistance in clarifying and/or identifying career, post-secondary education/training or employment options upon graduation.

It should be noted that assistance with the cost of a vocational evaluation, transition or supported employment assessment is not considered by VR to be a primary service, and not all students need or want to participate in vocational evaluations or assessments. Therefore, vocational evaluations or assessments should not be viewed as “a gate” that all students must pass through before accessing or receiving other VR services, and students should not be referred to

## Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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VR solely for the purpose of a vocational evaluation or assessment. For those students however, who have been determined eligible for VR services, but do not have a clear understanding of the type of career/employment options that are available and have not been able to identify post-school outcomes that are in line with their interests, skills and abilities; vocational evaluations or assessments can play a major role in successful transition planning and identifying appropriate VR services.

The remainder of this section will focus on the types of vocational evaluations and assessments that VR may be able to offer to students prior to graduation. Although these services are usually coordinated and purchased by VR, local adult service agencies such as community rehabilitation programs (CRP) and supported employment service providers (SESP) are the direct providers of these services. This strong partnership between schools, Vocational Rehabilitation and the CRP/SESP providers in Missouri have afforded students with disabilities many opportunities to explore their interests and identify realistic post-school career and employment outcomes.

It is very important that the VR counselor provides students/families with informed choice regarding which providers are located in their geographical area of the state and students have an opportunity to meet and choose which provider they would like to work with. Depending upon where the student lives however, some of the choices regarding providers and the type of evaluations/assessments available may be limited. Although there are exceptions based upon the individual needs of the student, CRP/SESP providers are generally contacted directly by the VR counselor once the VR counselor has determined that a vocational evaluation or assessment is appropriate for a particular student.

Information regarding vocational evaluations will be presented first, followed by transition assessments and supported employment assessments.

### ○ VOCATIONAL EVALUATION

[The following information has been taken from either the new CRP Agreement between VR and CRPs or copied directly from handouts prepared for VR counselors attending a recent VR training on outcome based funding and services through CRP's; which provides general guidance regarding the types of vocational evaluations that might be available for any individual (student or adult) through a CRP]:

Vocational Evaluation is the process of assessing a client's capacity to perform or develop the skills necessary to adapt or succeed in a given occupation or occupational class through objective observation of his/her activity in a structured situation.

# Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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The process systemically utilizes work, either real or simulated, as a focal point for assessment and/or vocational exploration, the purpose of which is to assist individuals in vocational development. Vocational evaluation incorporates medical, psychological, social, vocational, educational, cultural, and economic data into the process to attain the goals of the evaluation. Three techniques are usually associated with vocational evaluation:

1. **PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING**
2. **SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT**...can include training sites, simulated/actual workstations in house.
3. **COMMUNITY BASED ASSESSMENT**...can include training sites, simulated/actual workstations in the community.

Most CRPs use two or more of these techniques in their programs. The validity of the evaluation is generally strengthened by the use of more than one method.

Three levels of vocational evaluation are available and described on the following pages. If one vocational evaluation is authorized and another is determined to be more appropriate for the best interest of the client, the initial authorization may be cancelled and a new authorization issued.

The following charts contain guidelines to use when determining appropriate evaluation services at a CRP. Counselors should take into consideration both client characteristics and the purpose of the evaluation. Based on these criteria, counselor, working with the clients and CRP's should determine which program is appropriate for client's individual needs. Counselors should inform each client of what to expect and the evaluations purpose prior to entry.

## ❖ **SPECIFIC JOB OBJECTIVE EVALUATION**

The Specific Job Objective Evaluation is designed for the client who most closely fits the following characteristics.

### **Appropriate Client Characteristics to Consider**

**Does the client.....**

- Have 1 to 3 specific and realistic vocational objectives that need confirmation?
- Appear motivated?
- Have some stable work or educational history?
- Show indication of vocational aptitude or transferable job skills?

### **Evaluation Objective**

- Used to determine the most appropriate of 1 – 3 vocational objectives which may include any or all of the following services:

Aptitude testing  
Intelligence testing  
Achievement testing  
Interest inventories

### **With a full written report**

**Not intended when...**

- Vocational objective/goal is vague
- Unstable work/education background
- Appears unmotivated
- Social, emotional, drug or alcohol problems exist
- Physical or intellectual work tolerance is questioned
- Extended vocational exploration is necessary

# Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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## ❖ EXPLORATORY JOB OBJECTIVE EVALUATION

The Exploratory Job Objective Evaluation is designed for the client who most closely fits the following characteristics.

### **Appropriate Client Characteristics to Consider**

#### **Does the client...**

- Have more than three goals and/or vocational goals are vague?
- Appear motivated?
- Have some stable work or educational background?
- Show indication of vocational aptitude or transferable job skills?

### **Evaluation Objective**

- Vocational exploration is used to DETERMINE AND JUSTIFY client's vocational objective/goal through any or all of the following services:

Aptitude testing  
Intelligence testing  
Achievement testing  
Interest inventories  
Community based and/or situational assessment  
**Plus career exploration and full written report**

#### **Not intended when...**

- Unstable work/education background
- Appears unmotivated
- Social, emotional, drug, or alcohol problems exist
- Physical, intellectual or emotional work tolerance is questioned

## ❖ COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

The Comprehensive Evaluation is designed for the client who most closely fits the following characteristics.

### **Appropriate Client Characteristics to Consider**

#### **Does the client....**

- Have unstable work or educational background?
- Have social, emotional, drug or alcohol problems?
- Appear unmotivated?
- Have a physical, intellectual or emotional work tolerance questions?

### **Evaluation Objective**

- Used to DETERMINE AND JUSTIFY client's vocational goal or employability through:

Aptitude testing  
Intelligence testing  
Achievement testing  
Interest inventories  
Employee Development which may include community based and/or situational assessment  
Vocational Counseling  
**Plus career exploration with full written report**

#### **Not Intended When...**

- Client characteristics more closely fit those defined in a Specific or Exploratory Job Objective Evaluation

# Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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## Vocational Evaluation Report Guidelines

### Page 1. Case Identification Page

- Each CRP will have the latitude to format this page in any style desired; however, the report headings will be standardized per this format for all CRP's.

### Page 2. Recommendations/Vocational Supports, Modifications, or Training Strategies

- The heading of this page will be standardized for all CRP's.
- Based on feedback from DVR counselors on the CRP Team and Client Services Team, lengthy narratives and appendices will be omitted.
- The narrative will include test results/observations, which support and defend recommendations. This is not a place simply to reiterate test scores but rather allow the test data/observations to provide rationale for what you are recommending. For example, "As test results indicate intellectual functioning in the High Average Range and academic achievement at the post secondary grade level, the consumer's interest in pursuing a Bachelor's degree would appear to be appropriate. Specifically, this individual wishes to pursue a degree in Business."
- Recommendations should address referral questions.
- Recommendations should be designed to provide a clear road map for the client and counselor to follow in pursuit and achievement of the individual's expressed employment outcome(s).
- Recommendations may include immediate, short, and long-term employment goals or a single vocational goal, as individual circumstances dictate. In addition to vocational recommendations, non-work recommendations that have a bearing on employment should be included, as well.

### Page 3. Evaluation Staffing Summary

- Will be individualized as CRP's may use different instruments and have preferences to report them uniquely.
- This summary will be provided to the VR Counselor and client at the time of the staffing. For VR Counselors unable to attend the staffing, this summary will be mailed to him/her on the day of the staffing.
- The Client Services team requested that Evaluation Staffing Summaries include the Scaled Scores when the WAIS-III was administered.

### Page 4. Desk Reference Guide

- Will be standardized by the individual CRP based on the circumstances of the individual assessed. The report may or not address each individual item listed but will rather address those issues considered pertinent to setting goals and planning.
- This section will be presented in clear and concise terms, providing snapshot information on topics deemed significant to the individual evaluated. Again, the majority of DVR counselors do not favor lengthy narratives. Bullets would appear to be appropriate here. It is recommended these be consistent for CRP's statewide so we need to agree on what is included.

### Page 5. Checklist of Services Performed

- As CRP's use different assessment tools and instruments and refer to organizational documentation by different names and titles, this page will be individualized according to the operations of the CRP.

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## VOCATIONAL EVALUATION REPORT (Sample Format)

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

SSN:

Referring Counselor:

Vocational Evaluator:

Date of Admission:

Date of Report:

Primary Disability:

Secondary Disability:

Referral Question(s)/Reason(s) for Referral:

**Expressed Employment Outcome(s) at time of staffing:**

**Barriers to Employment Opportunities:**

**Vocational Strengths:**

**Recommendations/Vocational Supports, Modifications, or Training Strategies:**

## Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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### ○ COMPREHENSIVE AND COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSITION ASSESSMENTS

In the spring of 2001, the Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Rehabilitation approved a new transition assessment agreement which would offer school districts that had an approved Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP) and students with significant disabilities within those districts across the state, another type of vocational assessment. This type of assessment may be provided by Vocational Rehabilitation through local CRP and SESP providers who have developed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with local school districts regarding the coordination and provision of these comprehensive transition assessment services.

Please refer to **Appendix A** which includes a copy of the Transition Assessment Agreement that provides a detailed description of CTA and CBTA services, target population, referral process, MOU information, and the type of transition activities students would participate in during the assessment. Included in **Appendix A** is a checklist used when reviewing and approving individual MOUs.

The following guidelines have been developed by the VR transition team, in accordance with the transition assessment agreement, for use in completing transition assessment reports that will include all of the required information and assist partners in the transition planning process:

#### Comprehensive Transition Assessment Report (Sample Format)

- **Student Identification/Report Dates**
  - Student's name, address, SS#, DOB, disability(s).
  - Name of referring VRC and school district.
  - Assessment start date, ending date, date of report, and evaluator.
- **Student Case History** (from intake meeting and records)
  - Brief personal description of the student.
  - Current educational, residential, and employment status.
  - Referral questions, and/or any special assessment requests.
- **Medical/Psychological Information** (from personal/phone interviews)
  - Special mobility and/or communication considerations.
  - Physical strength and/or endurance considerations.
  - Current medications/side effects/compliance.
  - Current psychological and/or drug/alcohol treatment.
- **Transportation/Legal Issues** (from personal/phone interviews)
  - Identify transportation and/or legal barriers to employment and available agency/community/family supports.
- **Financial Incentives/Disincentives to Work** (from personal/phone interviews)
  - Identify student's status with regard to applying for/receiving SSI/SSDI benefits now or in the near future. Identify how these benefits, including insurance will or will not be affected by employment.
  - Identify student and parent/guardian concerns regarding the need to work a specified number of hours per week, flexibility in regard to work schedule/work location, and work ethic.

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- **Community Based Assessment Site Summary** (from direct observation)
  - Specify the number of sites in which the student was observed, the type of job tasks the student performed, and the length of time the student worked at each site.
  - Summarize those social, vocational, and interpersonal skills demonstrated by the student to include but not be limited to: personal grooming and hygiene, learning style, interaction with supervisors/co-workers, willingness to accept constructive criticism, and work speed.
- **Short Term Goals** (from personal/phone interviews)
  - Identify student's expressed vocational goals regarding what they would like to be doing for the first couple of years after graduation from high school.
  - Identify parent/family/guardian short term vocational goals for the student.
  - Identify teacher/WEC/various agency case managers short term vocational goals for the student.
- **Long Term Goals** (from personal/phone interviews)
  - Identify student's expressed vocational goals regarding what they would like to be doing in three to five years.
  - Identify parent/family/guardian long term vocational goals for the student.
  - Identify teacher/WEC/various agency case managers long term vocational goals for the student.
- **Summary and Final Recommendations**
  - Identify specific jobs and/or training programs, based upon student's interests, demonstrated skills/abilities, current job market/economy and transportation issues targeting short and long term vocational options.
  - Identify social, interpersonal, financial, and independent living skills that may need to be addressed before graduation or pursuing short and/or long term vocational/employment options.
  - Specify the level of employability for the student, such as sheltered, supported, or direct competitive employment.
  - Identify any other agencies or support services that the family or school may want to contact for additional supports.

[It should be noted that each of the CRP/SESP providers will have the latitude to format this report in any style desired, as this is only provided as guidance; however, the report headings should be fairly standardized per this format for all providers, since it follows the guidelines outlined in the CRP/SESP Transition Assessment Agreement.]

## ○ **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT (SEA)**

Vocational Rehabilitation may also offer supported employment assessment (SEA) services for students with the most significant disabilities in Missouri's schools through local SESP providers. The following information has been taken from the Supported Employment Assessment Agreement between VR and SESP providers:

This type of assessment should include a brief case history with a description of the student that includes pertinent medical, psychological, educational and vocational information. The assessment is also required to address the criteria necessary to determine a student's appropriateness for supported employment.



# Diagnostics, Vocational Evaluation/Assessment

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These criteria are in four categories as follows:

**Logistic:**

- Transportation needs;
- Availability of potential long term extended services.
- Schedule flexibility

**Financial:**

- Incentives (Need to work [Availability of SS work incentives])
- Disincentives (SSI, Medicaid, etc.)
- Employment incentives

**Performance:**

- Strength and endurance;
- Work tolerance and speed
- Learning style and implications for job placement;
- Functional application of academic skills, (e.g., reading, handling of money, time telling, etc.);
- Mobility;
- Effects of medication on functioning;

**Culture:**

- Job interests;
- Challenging behaviors;
- Residential setting and implications;
- Family/caregiver support;
- Expressive and receptive communication skills;
- Appearance

**The assessment and report shall** support a determination that the student has the ability or potential to engage in a program leading to supported employment, including the suggested number of hours per week the individual might be expected to work and the suggested type of employment the individual might be expected to pursue; and include work experience at a minimum of three community based work sites for a minimum of four hours at each site. The supported employment assessment report must also include a support implementation plan and name the long term extended service funding source and the anticipated types of supports necessary.

Although there may be additional vocational evaluations and assessments offered by other adult service agency providers; the information in this section attempted to present a thumbnail sketch of those primary evaluations and assessments that Vocational Rehabilitation typically provides in partnership with schools and CRP/SESP providers for students with disabilities. Educators are encouraged to contact their local vocational rehabilitation district office for additional clarification regarding these services.

# *Appendix C*

*Waiver of Senior Evaluation*

*VR Best Practice Guide: Diagnostics*

*VR Best Practice Guide: Confidentiality*

*RSA Definition of SLD*

*SLD/ADHD Corresponding Work Skills*

*WAIS-III Interpretation*

*SLD/ADHD VR Interview Questions*

## The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP)

### What is the Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP)?

The COOP program has developed through a partnership between vocational rehabilitation and local school districts to assist students with disabilities in earning school credit while participating in school directed and supervised competitive employment work experiences. It is designed to facilitate the integration and coordination of transition services for students with disabilities who receive special education services and who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

This program is available through an agreement endorsed by the Assistant Commissioners of Vocational Rehabilitation, Special Education, Vocational and Adult Education, and the Deputy Director of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind. A copy of this agreement is located in **Appendix A**. It provides one avenue for local school districts to pursue in meeting the needs of students with disabilities as they transition from school to post-secondary training and/or employment.

The COOP agreement must also be signed at the local level, by the participating school district, VR District Office, (and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind District Office, if applicable) and submitted to the Supervisor of Transition Services with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for final approval. The signed agreement provides assurance that students participating in the COOP program will receive high school credit toward graduation requirements for the hours they work, and will be provided the appropriate level of supervision by a certified special education teacher (Work Experience Coordinator or WEC) appointed by the local school district.

The intent of the COOP program is to integrate some of the transition activities of special education and vocational rehabilitation through a continuum of services so that students will have an opportunity to experience the “world of work” while still under the umbrella or “safety net” of the school. In this program, the school district assigns a teacher certified in special education to serve as the Work Experience Coordinator or WEC, and it is their job to provide the student with the necessary tools, supports, and services to be successful in a job setting of their choice. Vocational Rehabilitation also assigns a counselor to work closely with the WEC in providing additional supports and services to assist the student in successfully completing the COOP program, and to provide career/vocational planning for the future. The WEC and the VR Counselor work in close partnership to coordinate and provide transition services for students with disabilities.

## The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP)

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### What are the specific guidelines for referring students, implementing and providing services through the COOP program?

In order for a student to participate in the COOP program, the following general guidelines must be met:

- The school district must have an approved COOP agreement with Vocational Rehabilitation, and assign a work experience coordinator (WEC) to supervise students in the program; and
- The student must be receiving special education services through an IEP, and referred for this program by the school; and
- The student must be determined eligible for VR services; and
- An individualized plan for employment (IPE) must have been jointly developed by the student and the VR counselor, in coordination with the student's IEP.

Students who are “homebound” may participate in the COOP program if the IEP team determines it is an appropriate service for that child, however the IEP will need to clearly specify the amount of time the student will participate during the school day. Students may be released from school all day or less than one hour per day, if the IEP team makes this determination.

Although the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has no control over the exact number of credits a school may award a student for COOP participation, DESE does provide guidance regarding the awarding of high school credits which is based upon the number of hours per week that the student works. Generally, school districts are advised not to award more than four units of credit per school year.

Please refer to the **“Vocational Rehabilitation and Cooperative Work Experience Program Easy Guide”** located in **Appendix D**, along with sample employee progress reports for additional guidance regarding the COOP program.

### Work Experience Coordinator (WEC) and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities listed below may differ slightly among individual VR counselors and work experience coordinators, depending upon the size/type of caseload they are assigned, and the amount of time allocated for providing COOP services to students with disabilities; however this information should be utilized in coordinating and supervising the COOP program:

# **The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP)**

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## **Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's (VRC) Role in COOP**

- Determine student's eligibility for VR services.
- Provide needed documentation to WEC such as a copy of the IPE.
- Speak to students in the classroom regarding pre-vocational and vocational skills related to successful employment.
- Speak to parents/students individually and group settings regarding transition activities, COOP program, and VR services post - graduation.
- Observe students participating in on-campus, work-related settings.
- Participate in the development of the student's IEP as it relates to transition planning and services.
- Assist WEC with local job development.
- Visit student at the job site and observe student progress on-the-job.
- Provide assistance with vocational evaluations/assessments, as determined appropriate.
- Counsel the student about employment/post -secondary training and education opportunities, prior to the student exiting the school setting.
- Speak to local organizations with WEC about the Coop Program, and on-the-job training.
- Assist the WEC in setting up field trips to local businesses for students.
- Coordinate services with the Vocational Resource Educator (VRE) and School-to-Work Coordinator, if appropriate.

## **Work Experience Coordinator's (WEC) Role in COOP**

- Participate in IEP meetings and in the development of the IPE, as appropriate.
- Develop classroom instruction focusing on vocational and work-related skills.
- Increase awareness and communication between the school, parents and potential employer regarding partnerships.
- Coordinate services with the Vocational Resource Educator (VRE) and School-to-Work Coordinator, if appropriate.
- Work with faculty to promote student's success in the classroom.
- Set up on-campus sites for job exploration and the teaching of job behaviors.
- Identify students that would benefit from vocational rehabilitation services and make appropriate referrals.

## **The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP)**

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- Provide needed documentation to VRC such as academic/achievement testing, school medical records and copy of IEP.
- Work with parents and family members in providing services to their children through the Cooperative Work-Experience Program.
- Facilitate and monitor student progress with other teachers, employers at the job site, and VRC.
- Supervise students at the job site, and monitor work-skills/work behaviors through written and verbal employer feedback.
- Market COOP program to local employers, identify and secure community based job-sites and/or work experience opportunities, and coordinate appropriate job placements for students with the VRC.

For additional information regarding developing and implementing work experience activities in accordance with Fair Labor Standards and DESE guidelines, please refer to the "Transition and Cooperative Work Experience Handbook" posted on Vocational Rehabilitation's home page, under "transition" at [www.dese.state.mo.us/divvocrehab/](http://www.dese.state.mo.us/divvocrehab/).

# *Appendix D*

*VR and COOP Easy guide*

*Sample Employee Progress Reports*

## Partners in the Transition Planning Process

### Vocational and Adult Education

Linking students with disabilities to vocational training programs while they are still in high school may be one of the most important and greatest challenges in the transition planning process. Section two of this guide reviewed the role that vocational education, and specifically the vocational resource educator might play in planning for a student's future and achieving successful post-school outcomes.

Perhaps the most important first step in this process is accessing vocational training programs at career centers for students with disabilities. If the IEP team is considering the possibility of a vocational training program at a local career center, and the student has expressed an interest in this type of training, then the school district is encouraged to invite the VRE or another representative from the career center to participate in transition planning in the IEP. Representatives from the career center can provide expertise regarding the type of training programs available, and visit with the student directly to determine their level of interests, skills, and possible accommodations that might need to be utilized.

If the student chooses to enroll in one of the training programs offered at the local career center, and the IEP team (including the VRE or representative from the career center) is in agreement; every effort should be made to assist that student in accessing and successfully completing this particular training program. Prior to enrolling the student in a particular training program, however it is noted that the student and other IEP team members should have clearly reviewed and discussed employment in this or a similar field of training upon graduation from high school.

Because access to a training program is only important in the transition planning process if the student actually sees that training as related to additional training or employment they may want to do post-high school; students should participate in tours at the career centers and explore those particular fields of work before enrolling in a training program. This type of career exploration activity and pre-planning will assist the student in determining if he/she wants to attend a career center/vocational technical school prior to graduation; and will also provide the career center with good referral information regarding the student's strengths and skills so that proper accommodations may be made if necessary.

This type of partnership between the local school district and the career center may also significantly increase the number of appropriate placements and training related post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities that have attended and successfully completed training programs at career centers. Additional information regarding accessing vocational education programs may be found in **Appendix E**.



## Partners in the Transition Planning Process

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### Higher Education

The role of higher education in the transition planning process is much different than most of the other partners because representatives from higher education are often not able to attend individual IEP meetings or participate directly in the transition planning process. However, post-secondary personnel from the office of disability services or student support services are often available to meet with students/families at the college campus or training facility; and are accessible during career fairs or other special engagements at the high schools.

Perhaps one of the most important factors in good transition planning for students who have identified post-school outcomes in the area of post-secondary education or training is preparation. Students often have no idea how to access support services and accommodations at the post-secondary level and therefore, it is the responsibility of the school district and other partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation to help student/families in this process.

As students gain a greater understanding of what will be required of them as adults in a post-secondary training environment, become better self-advocates and are more aware of the accommodations and supports they may need, successful post-secondary training/education outcomes for students with disabilities should increase. Therefore, it is extremely important to assist students in planning and preparing for college or training beyond high school very early in the transition planning process, so that they are adequately prepared and have the greatest opportunities for success. Some transition activities in this area may include student's touring college campuses and meeting with disability support services personnel, participating in mock interviews where the student practices good self-advocacy skills in expressing his/her rights under ADA and 504 and the need for specific accommodations, as appropriate.

For additional information regarding accessing higher education opportunities for students with disabilities and some of the nuts and bolts involved in preparing students for these types of post-secondary activities, please refer to "The Missouri College Guidebook: Missouri Higher Education Opportunities for Students with Disabilities Including Missouri College and University Profiles", compiled by the Missouri Association on Higher Education and Disability. Included in **Appendix E** are some of the many wonderful resources available in the Missouri College Guidebook. Some colleges and training programs have also developed student guides on accommodations, accessibility, testing, and support services which could also be utilized in transition planning prior to graduation.

## Partners in the Transition Planning Process

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### **Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) and Supported Employment Service Providers (SESP)**

Local Community Rehabilitation Programs and Supported Employment Service Providers not only provide evaluation and assessment services for students with disabilities as discussed in Section Five, but they also offer a wide variety of employment services as well. For those students with disabilities who need assistance in identifying realistic post-school outcomes and/or additional supports and services in obtaining or maintaining employment in their chosen field of work, Vocational Rehabilitation will often contract with local CRP or SESP providers for the provision of transition services. Therefore, these providers play a key role in helping many students with disabilities to achieve successful post-school outcomes.

In addition to vocational evaluation and assessments, Community Rehabilitation Programs may also be able to provide employment outcome services, short-term community employment services, employee development, and some specialized skills training. Supported Employment Service Providers may provide job development, task analysis, supports case management, individual job coaching, group job coaching such as enclaves, or mobile crews, and extended employment services for students with disabilities.

The vocational rehabilitation counselor will work with the student, school and provider to determine which service might be most appropriate, and then authorize and coordinate transition services on an individual case by case basis. Generally speaking, most of the services described above will not be provided until the student is in their final year of school, or earlier if appropriate, based upon the unique needs of the individual student.

### **Centers for Independent Living (CIL)**

Centers for Independent Living may provide any number of services to assist students with disabilities in achieving and maintaining self-sufficient lives within the community. Although CILs are operated independently and services provided locally, some of the services that they may be able to provide to students with disabilities as they transition from school to post-school activities include: information and referral services, connecting students with mentors with disabilities, advocacy training, peer counseling services, housing and/or transportation assistance, training in the skills of independent living, and assistance with personal care attendants. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of services, but simply a quick overview of the types of services they may be able to provide during the transition planning process.

## Partners in the Transition Planning Process

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It is also important to note that through funding available from the Missouri Transition Alliance Partnership Project (MOTAP), the DESE Divisions of Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation provided one-time grant awards to approximately 14 Centers for Independent Living for the development and implementation of transition-related training. The training activities targeted youth with disabilities age 14-21 in Missouri's Public Schools, and were developed in partnership with local school districts and Vocational Rehabilitation offices highlighting three key areas: disability awareness, self-determination, and self-advocacy. Although many of these CILs were already providing transition services to students, the grant award provided them with an opportunity to increase or expand those services and play a major role in transition planning activities.

# *Appendix E*

*Accessing Vocational Education to Improve  
Graduation Rates and Post-Secondary Outcomes*

*Access to Vocational Education for Students with  
Disabilities*

*Missouri College Guidebook: Tips on Self-Advocacy,  
Junior/Senior Year Checklists, What to Expect From  
Post-Secondary Institutions, Post-Secondary  
Education Options, and Post-Secondary Transition  
Referral Form*

## Transition Planning at the Local Level

### Developing and Maintaining Successful Transition Partnerships

Now that partners in the transition planning process have a better understanding of each other's roles, responsibilities and services that may be provided for students with disabilities, transition services may be more flexible and easily coordinated. It is important that outside agencies not only come to the "transition planning table", but are also really prepared to review and discuss the services they may be able to provide both now and in the future.

The focus of transition planning has become much more out-come oriented, driven by the student's vision for the future and his/her expressed post-school goals. Local school districts and adult service agencies are also becoming much more accountable for providing quality transition services that positively affect student post-school outcomes related to post-secondary training/education or employment opportunities. With all of this focus on improving student post-school outcomes, partners really do seem more energized and motivated to be a part of the transition planning process for students that will truly "make a positive difference".

Included in **Appendix F**, is an article published by the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHY) in January of 1999, entitled, "Transition Planning: A Team Effort". Even though this article was published three years ago, the information regarding transition planning and partnerships is still very applicable today, and provides excellent examples of the success that can be achieved for students with disabilities when partners in the transition planning process truly collaborate. The article states that , "collaboration begins with networking, coordination, and cooperation and then requires team members to share decisions, responsibility, and trust. It requires team members invest time and energy to come up with options and design strategies for carrying out these plans."

Obviously, this type of quality transition planning requires partners to do much more than simply come to the table and talk about services, it requires taking ownership of, making a commitment to, and finding a way to provide those services necessary for students with disabilities to achieve positive post-school outcomes. If local transition partnerships can make a positive difference for students, then maintaining those partnerships will be easy.

### Local Transition Action Planning Guide

The following Local Transition Action Plan may be used to identify those roles, responsibilities, and services that transition partners at the local level may provide for students with disabilities, and generate initial discussions and networking among those partners:

## Transition Planning at the Local Level

<b>Local Transition Action Plan</b>					
Region #	School District	Career Center	VR Office	CRP/SESP Provider	Indep. Living
Contact Person					
Role in Transition					
Services Provided					
Communication How, When, Why					
IEP Involvement and Scheduling					
Student and Family Involvement					
When to be invited					
Diagnostic Availability					
Past Assessments					
Further Plans or Next Steps:					

# ***Appendix G***

*VR District Offices*

*Community Rehabilitation Programs*

*Supported Employment Service Providers*

*Centers for Independent Living*